

This is a story of a man and a woman. The man was arrested for a hideous double murder. The woman clung to him and fought for him and believed in him and saved him.

Her staunch devotion held him back from the gallows. Now he is free, and the woman who made him so by her fierce and determined fight, has turned upon him and said:

"We must never see each other again." The woman is MAYBELLE NEILSON, of Woodbury, N. J. The man is ELI SHAW of Camden.

Just two sentences uttered by ELI SHAW upon the witness stand turned the love in the woman's steadfast heart to indifference. It is a strange "human document," and full of more than passing interest.



MAYBELLE NEILSON.

# The Words That Killed Maybelle Neilson's Love for Eli Shaw.

Extract from court reports.

Question—Mr. Shaw, when you heard the burglar, who went into the room first?

Answer—My mother.

Question—What happened then?

Answer—He shot my mother and I ran.

The jury brought in a verdict of acquittal. "No motive proven," the wisacres said, and Eli Shaw walked out into the wintry sunshine a free man. Saved by his staunch-hearted little sweetheart just as surely as if she had rushed upon the scaffold and torn the rope from around his neck with her own tender little hands. There was a hysterical scene of joy, and the town buzzed with stories of an immediate marriage.

Maybelle Neilson had made her wedding dress while Eli Shaw was in jail, the gossips said, and now that he was free she would lose no time in wearing it. Miss Neilson did not deny the stories. She took Eli Shaw's nerveless hand, smiled up into his wan face and said nothing. That was just a few short weeks ago.

Now Maybelle Neilson announces that she is not going to marry Eli Shaw.

The girl who left every friend she had in the world except her mother to stand by the man she was promised to in his trouble, has left him in his hour of hope.

The woman who fought for his life as a tigress fights for her helpless cub has turned upon the man she saved from a shameful death, and tells him: "Go, it is better that we never see each other again."

The news of the broken engagement has set all the tongues in Jersey to wagging.

"He has confessed to her," said some of the gossips. "And she will not marry a murderer."

"She is tired of him," said others of the gossips. "She likes being a martyr, like all women. Now that he is free there is nothing exciting about loving him."

"Oh, women, in our hours of ease," said yet again others. "It's the same old story. The winds that blow are not so fickle as the most steadfast woman."

And not one of these kindly and well-meaning preachers told anything anywhere near to the truth.

The truth is, as usual, very simple.

Maybelle Neilson has broken her engagement with Eli Shaw because she has discovered that he is a coward.

He went on the stand in his trial and testified that a burglar killed his mother.

"I heard a noise," he said, "and I called mother. We went into the room together. The burglar was there. He shot at mother, and I ran."

The steadfast little sweetheart sat very still in the court room and listened. She said not one word to a human soul, but from that hour she made up her mind about Eli Shaw.

Being a loyal little soul, and a true-hearted one, she kept her change of heart to herself—until the man she had loved was free.

She made a little feast in his honor. She invited him to her house. She walked abroad with him, that all her little world might see that she still stood by him, and when the gossip and the talking and the wonderment



AMERICAN  
MAGAZINE  
SUPPLEMENT  
OF THE  
NEW YORK  
JOURNAL AND ADVERTISER.  
DEC. 25  
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W. R. HEARST 1898.

By Winifred Black.

LITTLE MAYBELLE NEILSON isn't going to marry Eli Shaw after all—and there is a reason. Maybelle Neilson is the pretty little Jersey girl who saved her sweetheart's life over in Camden a few weeks ago.

Eli Shaw lived with his mother and grandmother in a little old-fashioned house in the old part of Camden.

One dreadful morning the two women were found murdered. Eli Shaw was arrested and charged with the murder. Everything was against him.

He cried and protested his innocence, but thread by thread the web of circumstantial evidence gathered around him.

The story of the hideous crime was three times publicly rehearsed.

Once at the coroner's inquest, once at a trial which came to an abrupt end because of a suspicious jurymen, and once at the last trial, when his life hung wavering in the balance for days of suspense, and suspicion, and angry altercation.

At each and every trial Eli Shaw made a poor spectacle. He told a confused tale of burglars. All the circumstantial evidence in the case went to show that whoever killed the women were already in the house, when Eli Shaw swore that he was alone with his mother and grandmother.

The women had \$230 in cash saved. No one but Eli Shaw knew this. He was working for \$10 a week. He was going to get married to Maybelle Neilson. He needed money. When his grandmother and his mother died, he would come into possession of a neat little property.

A pistol was found in the chimney—a pistol which some one had fired. Before the first trial was well begun, every one in Camden but Eli Shaw's counsel and Maybelle Neilson believed that he had killed the two poor old women to get the money they left him.

No one would speak well of him. No one had any word of charity for him. No one but his sweetheart, little Maybelle Neilson and her mother.

They would not hear one word against him. Maybelle Neilson took her little fortune, a matter of \$10,000, and offered it all to the man she loved.

"Take it," she said. "I wish it was ten times more. Take it and save your life."

When Eli Shaw broke down and cried like a scared child before the eyes of the twelve men who were trying him, little Maybelle Neilson sat beside him as white as death and as calm as a statue of the Sphinx.

Nothing frightened her. Nothing discouraged her. Nothing made her brave eyes falter for one instant.

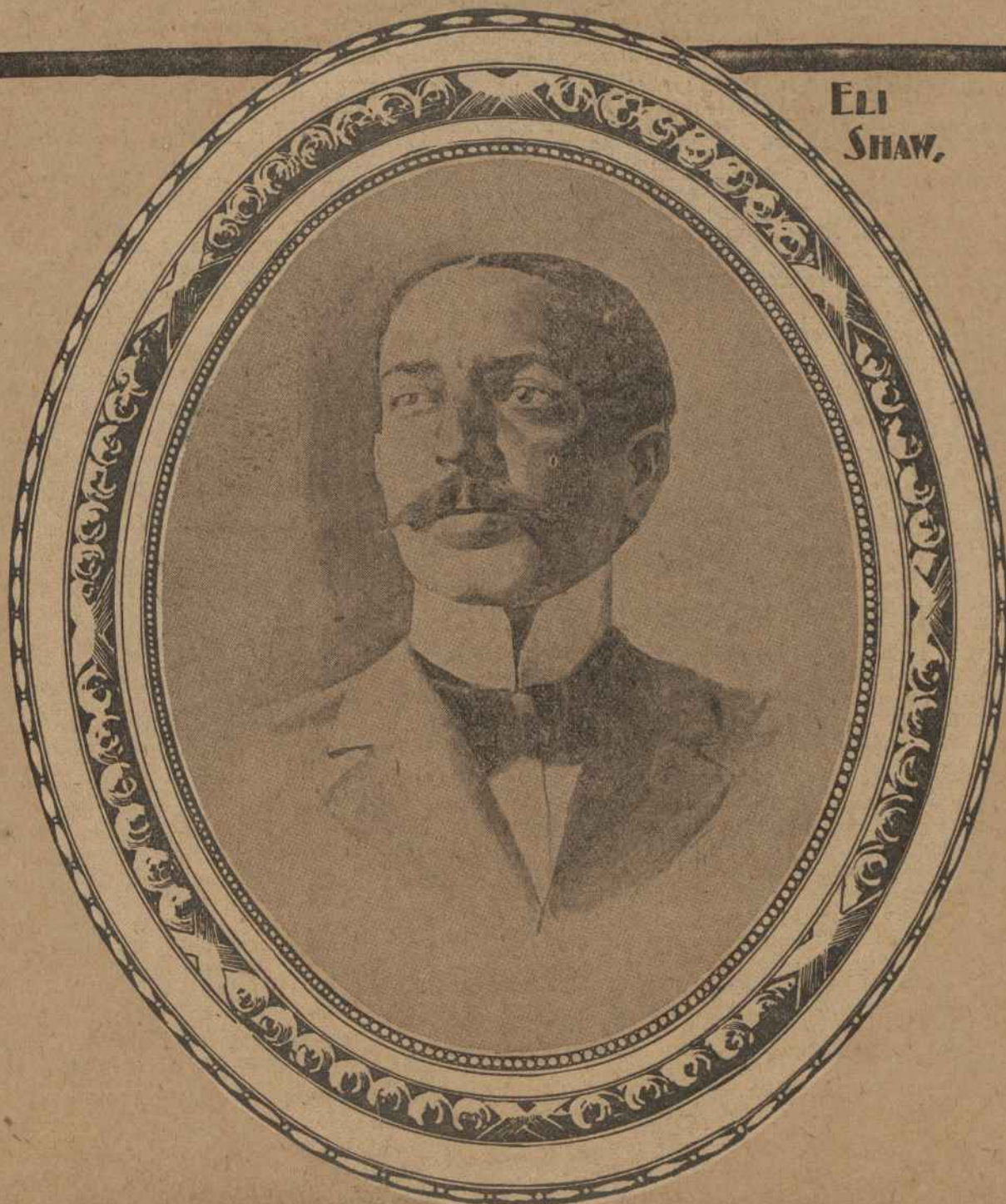
"Eli is a good man," she said to every one who would listen to her. "Nothing can harm a really good man."

She grew thin and haggard. The strain of the trial turned her pink cheeks white, and her sensitive little mouth grew drawn and set, but she never cried, and she never gave up for one fleeting moment.

Every day she went to the court room and sat beside her sweetheart, and every night, when she went back home she wrote him a letter to bear him loving company in his cell.

She went on the stand and bore witness for him. She told the jury that Eli Shaw needed no money. "I was going to buy our house," she said, "and mamma was going to furnish it for us. Eli needed no money. All I had was his. He knew it, and I told him so again and again. Why should he kill those two poor old women that he loved and that loved him?" Her tender voice thrilled through the crowded room until no one there could hear it without tears.

After days of agonizing suspense the end came.



ELI SHAW.

had died out, she looked the man squarely in the face and told him: "Go and take a new name. Fight out a new place in the world. For us, and all that we were to each other—it is the end. We must never meet again."

And Eli Shaw went forth, and told all the reporters that the woman he loved had ceased to love him—and no one could guess the reason why.

Maybelle Neilson is a slender slip of a girl, with soft, ash-blond hair and a delicate little apple blossom face.

"Eli is going away," she said yesterday. "He will begin all over again. That is best. When did I decide? I don't know. I haven't slept very well since all this misery. I've known Eli for five years. He used to come over to our church socials. That's how I met him. We've been going together some three years, off and on."

"A man came to our house one evening about half past nine o'clock. He said he wanted to see me. When I went into the parlor he stood up and told me that Eli Shaw's mother and grandmother had been murdered, and that Eli had killed them."

"I don't know what I did. I almost wanted to laugh. It seemed queer and outlandish and like a dream that is awful and frightened you and yet that is foolish, too."

"I knew Eli didn't do it."

"Just as soon as I saw him he told me he hadn't. But I knew it, any way. If he had told me he had done it I wouldn't have believed him. Well, then he was arrested, and of course I did the best I could to cheer him up. It's so funny the way people talk about me in the case. Of course I stood by him. What else should I do? Why, we were expecting to be married in a few weeks when he was arrested."

Nobody believed him but mamma and Mr. Scoville, his lawyer, and my friends were all provoked at me, and lots of them wouldn't speak to me, and haven't spoken to me yet. It made me feel badly—but I couldn't help it. He didn't kill them, and I know he didn't."

"It was pretty hard sitting in the court room so long, so many days—and one day when Eli went on the stand and every one stared at him so and he looked so dreadfully—I fainted away. That night I slept a little better than I had been sleeping. I was so tired, I had to, I guess—and in the morning, when I woke up, I had made up my mind."

"If he is convicted, I said to myself, 'I'll stand by him till the very end. If he is acquitted, I'll help him get a new start, and then—we must say goodbye.'"

"Mamma and I talked it all over, and she thought the same as I did. Mamma's been very good. She never nagged at me about it in any way. She just helped me do what was right."

"So when Eli was free and had had time to get rested a little and was thinking about what to do, I told him—and that's all. Anything special that made me make up my mind? No, it just came to me. Eli was in the store that day, and I seemed to 'sense things' some way—and that's all."

"Brave? Me brave? That's so queer. I get a batch of letters every day now. They come from everywhere, from people I never knew, and they all call me brave. I don't see why."

"I've done what any true woman would do. I wish I was brave."

"I'd rather be brave than be anything else."

"I love courage. I couldn't care for a man who was afraid. Could you? Do you think any woman could?"

"He shot at mother, and I ran," said Eli Shaw upon the stand that day when Maybelle Neilson fainted in the court room.

"He shot at mother and I ran"—and in the speaking of those few words he killed the loyal love of a loyal heart.

For old and young, comely and ugly, grave and gay, one thing all women despise in their uttermost hearts, and that one thing is a coward.

WINIFRED BLACK.